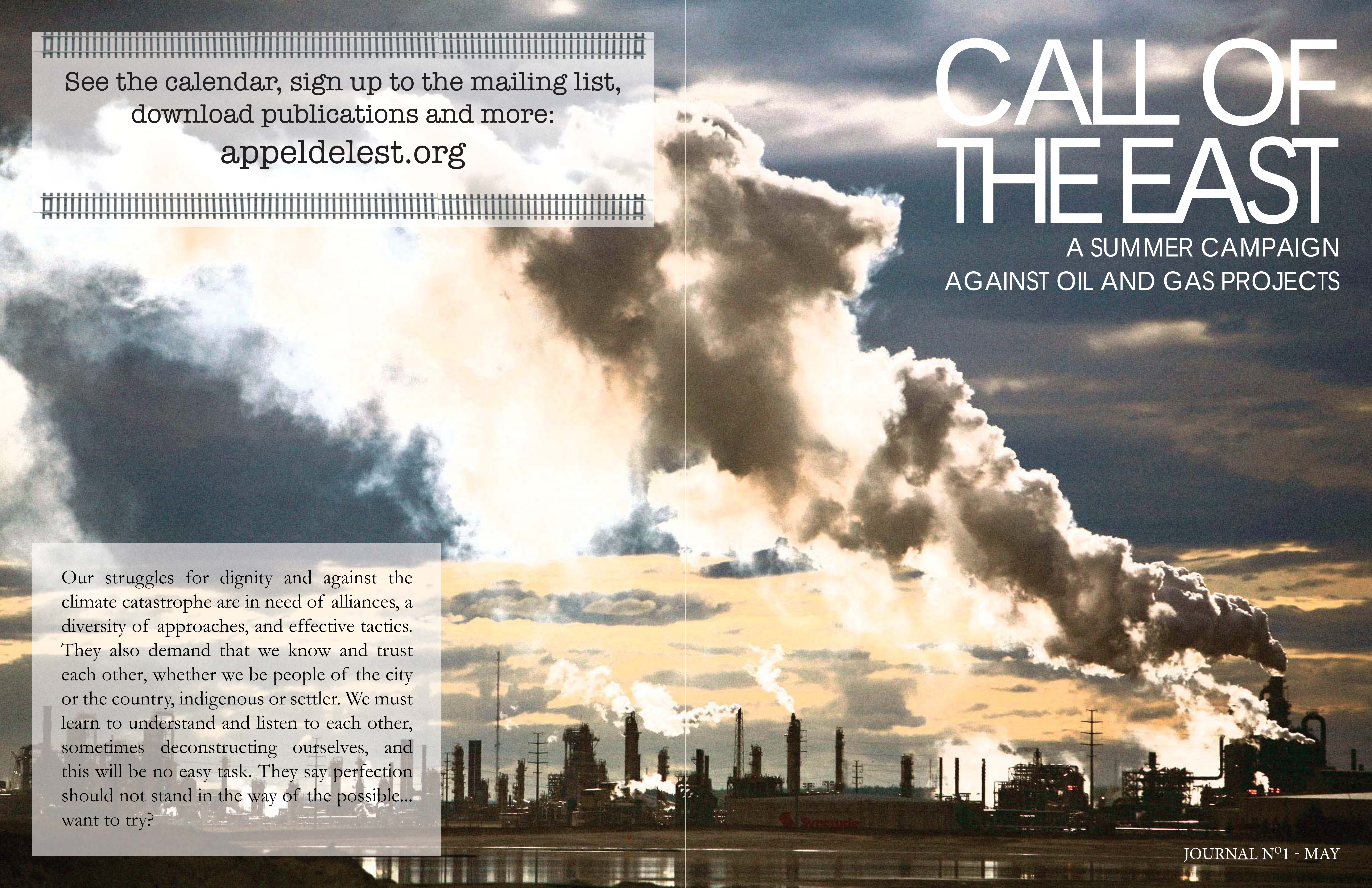


See the calendar, sign up to the mailing list,
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Our struggles for dignity and against the climate catastrophe are in need of alliances, a diversity of approaches, and effective tactics. They also demand that we know and trust each other, whether we be people of the city or the country, indigenous or settler. We must learn to understand and listen to each other, sometimes deconstructing ourselves, and this will be no easy task. They say perfection should not stand in the way of the possible... want to try?

CALL OF THE EAST

A SUMMER CAMPAIGN AGAINST OIL AND GAS PROJECTS

JOURNAL N^O^1 - MAY

THE CALL

To environmentalists, indigenous communities, allies, friends and comrades:

A number of groups have been organizing for some time against the extractive industry, pipelines and the train transportation of oil. We cannot trust in the “good will” of those in power; just as shale gaz exploitation was blocked by a popular movement, it is through our mobilization and opposition that we will succeed in stopping these projects!

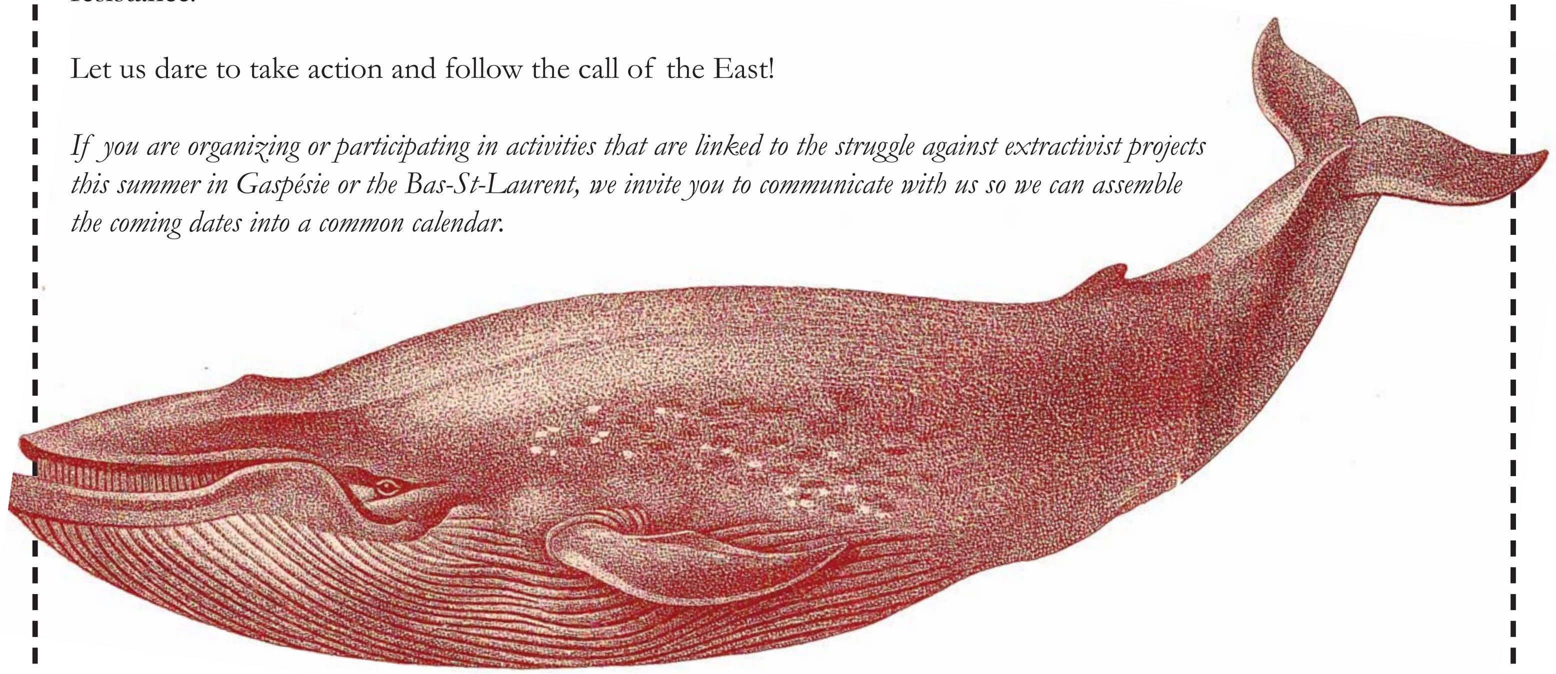
Camps have been held, various environmentalist groups have deployed impressive awareness-raising efforts, demonstrations and marches have taken place in many cities, the Cacouna oil harbour project was stopped by popular mobilization, and countless other actions have already contributed to slowing down these destructive projects.

In the wake of these events and in order to give further impulse to the mobilization, the Printemps 2015 committees, the ASSÉ and many other activist groups are calling for a campaign throughout Gaspésie and Bas-St-Laurent this summer. During the months of July and August, a number of activities will take place in these regions. They will act as occasions to share and spread information, and to constitute the forces that are necessary to stop the ransack that is taking place there.

We have little time, more and more oil projects are set up and once implemented, become more difficult to stop. These companies are provoking the catastrophe and we must imperatively pull on the emergency brake. Their transformation of the world into a great dump knows no vacation: let us make ours an occasion for joyous resistance.

Let us dare to take action and follow the call of the East!

If you are organizing or participating in activities that are linked to the struggle against extractivist projects this summer in Gaspésie or the Bas-St-Laurent, we invite you to communicate with us so we can assemble the coming dates into a common calendar.



www.appeldelest.org
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risk of accidents? This February 14, a CN train derailed close to Gogama, in north Ontario, and the consequent oil spill caught fire. The track was quickly reopened and a second derailment, on March 7, involved 39 wagons that also caught fire destroying a bridge, 700 feet of rail, and contaminating the adjacent river. This second derailment occurred at a 40 km distance from the first.

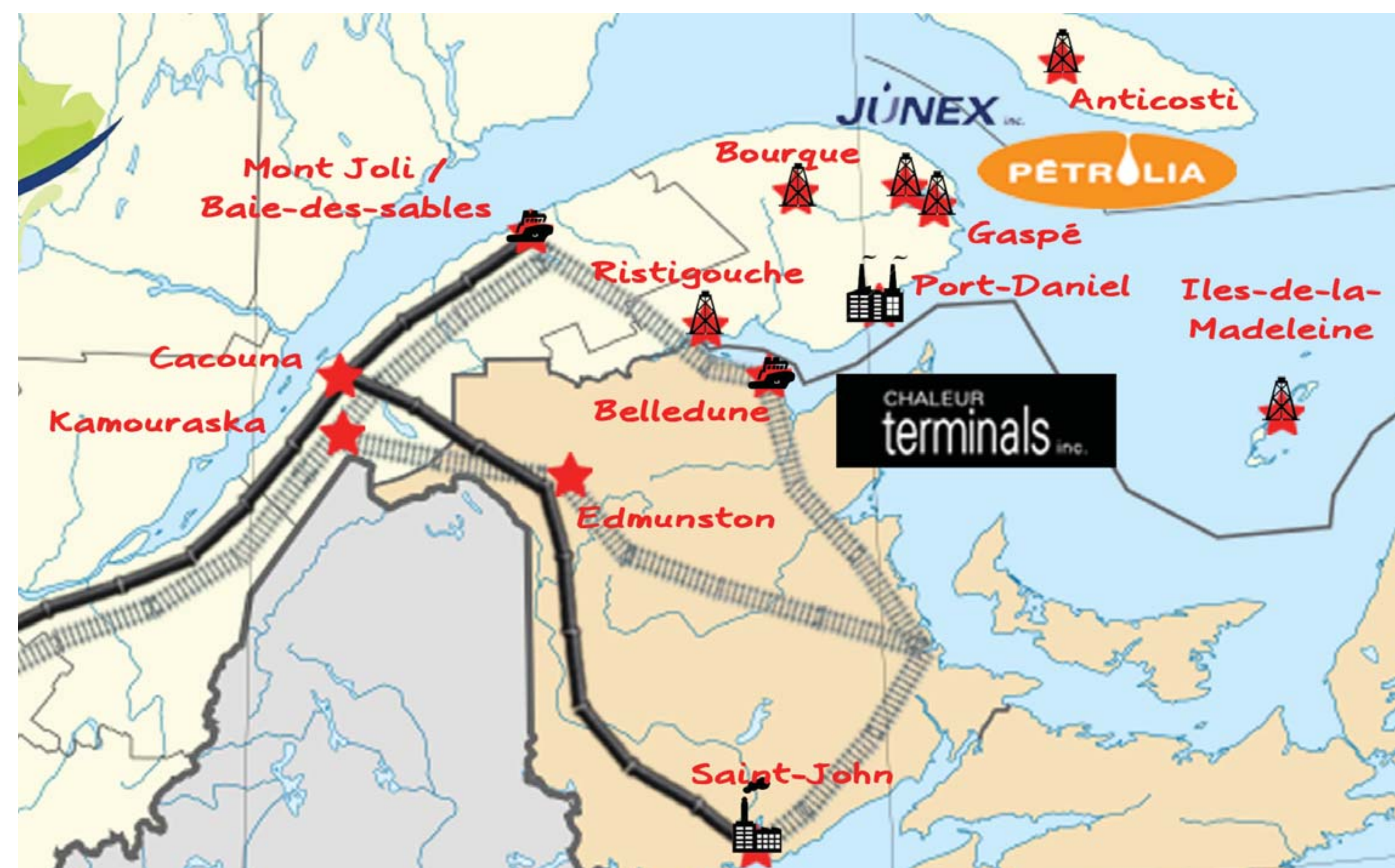
If nothing is done, these kinds of accidents will multiply. The US State Department, in a report presented at public hearings on the Keystone XL project, projects 6 to 28 deaths a year and dozens of injuries related to oil transport by rail. Even if we manage to avoid direct deaths (for instance by reducing the speed of the trains), the environmental consequences are inevitable. We know of no effective way to recover oil when ice is present, and many train routes follow rivers. We cannot decontaminate vulnerable ecosystems because the removal of a layer of contaminated substrate unfortunately entails the complete destruction of the surrounding ecosystem.

One year after the accident at Lac-Mégantic, government analysts continue to find contaminated sediment in the Chaudière river. Dredging has been proposed as a means to completely decontaminate, but there is no good solution following a spill. Either we remove a layer of life that is barely surviving despite the contamination, or we let it try and recover as best it can without stirring things up.

Let’s not forget to mention that the oil industry is establishing priority on railroads, delaying passenger and merchandise trains. In short, the dangers and trade-offs are numerous, and the only possible advantage is for the oil companies, that will be able to further expand their devastating projects of production and combustion. This is a game that local populations, and particular indigenous populations, always end up losing.

STRUGGLING TOGETHER ON MULTIPLE FRONTS!

Whether it’s extraction or transportation, battle fronts on which to struggle are not lacking: they come together in a fight against an entire system, and its infrastructure. These are struggles to maintain the possibilities and conditions necessary to life. In the background, our struggle also consists in preparing infrastructures for the transition, infrastructures that inspire something other than fear and imminent catastrophe. In many cases, these projects are without practical form: their victory is not assured and the hour of our resistance has come, calling on us to block those projects that have yet to be materialized.



Enbridge's line 9B, situated between Sarnia and Montreal, will undergo three major changes: the reversion of its flow, a 30% increase of volume and a change in the nature of the product. This reversal planned for mid-June is marked by Enbridge's refusal to do hydrostatic tests. These tests consist in pumping water at very high pressures, allowing the detection of flaws and fissures that could lead to harmful spills.

Transcanada's Energy East project entails the construction of a 4600 km pipeline from Western Canada to transport diluted bitumen (dilbit) from the tar sands to export terminals and refineries in the East. The Cacouna terminal project seems to have been defeated, and the sharp drop in oil prices has cooled down promoters' passions, but a rumor remains according to which the Cacouna terminal will be replaced by a new exportation project in Baie-des-Sables near Matabe, or possibly in Lévis. The company must submit a new route, which implies a delay of up to two years. The Irving refinery in Saint John, New Brunswick currently imports the majority of their crude. They would consume a large proportion of what can be delivered via pipeline. Transcanada's project thus conserves its momentum.

Pipeline construction requires enormous amounts of time, monetary investment and, as it is a new infrastructure, provokes considerable opposition. Oil flows through a pipeline in one direction only and so does not respond to the "just in time" logic of hydrocarbon transport: the rail network connecting the entirety of North America can be used to send oil to the terminal where the price is best, while minimizing the construction of new infrastructure. This is why the operators of North Dakota chose train transport in 2009. From 2009 to 2013, we went from 20 thousand to 800 thousand barrels of oil transported via rail in North America (Canada and the USA). Accidents involving oil spills have seen a proportional increase.

The CN already transports large quantities of crude towards the Saint John refinery. The route passes through Montreal via Point-Saint-Charles, and then takes the south shore of the St-Lawrence from Montreal to Kamouraska, where it turns through Temiscouata towards Edmunston. If the Chaleurs Terminal oil port sees the light of day at Belledune, in Chaleurs Bay, two more trains of 100 to 120 wagons per day will follow this same route, or continue on to Mont-Joli and cross the Matapedia valley.

Repeated derailments in certain areas leave us in grave doubt as to the quality of existing CN infrastructures and the ethics of the company. Are sections of the track being reopened knowing that they present an elevated



Posters from Coop Coup d'Griffe, available on appeldelest.org

An invitation to merge our struggles

With the Call of the East, we initiate a campaign against the various projects of the oil economy. This open initiative is based on a flexible calendar in which local activities come together, increasing their visibility. The Call of the East is not a group in the formal sense. This idea of a convergence has come out of recent discussions between groups of ecologists, anti-colonialists and students. The goal is to create and sustain a momentum throughout the months of July and August, particularly in Gaspésie and the Lower St-Laurence (Bas-St-Laurent). Our desire is to bring more attention to devastating oil projects. It is a call for, on the one hand, an encounter between the various groups struggling in parallel and, on the other hand, for the multiplication of autonomous actions that share a common sensibility in relation to the transport and exploitation of oil.

> *«By joining forces, we increase the pressure.»*

Several major projects are being developed in these regions. Whether it's the reversal of line 9, the increase in the train transportation of oil or the expansion of exploratory drilling, these projects necessarily aggravate the climate crisis, pose immediate threats to the surrounding environment and dangers to neighboring communities. What's more, these projects are being implemented on unceded indigenous territories. This pillage is undertaken in complete disrespect of indigenous peoples' ways of life and communities. Time is short, and the point of no return is approaching fast.

We invite you to take up the Call of the East and organize activities in Gaspésie, in the Lower St-Laurence and elsewhere in "Quebec" this summer. Whether a conference, a workshop, a training camp, a blockade, a tour to share information and ideas, or a festive or artistic event, please write us so we can announce it. By joining our forces, we build up the pressure!

Let's do away with oil addiction and abolish the colonialist mindset! Let's come together and build the ties that will make us stronger to oppose the catastrophe brought on by the government and the oil industry!

Let us build the opposition and alternatives to these projects!

Solidarity, always. - Call of the East



To block the end of the world

Over the past few years, our not-so-rosy image of the future has gotten considerably darker. Every day brings its lot of new catastrophes, reminders of how critical the environmental situation now is. Oil trains derailing and exploding, aging pipelines leaking natural gas, oil spills from the ever more numerous cargo-ships on our seaways, etc. Despite these alarming events, authorities do nothing to change the situation. Scorning at all greenhouse gas reduction targets, the Quebec government strikes back with its Plan Nord and gives the green light to fracking operations in Gaspésie and Anticosti island. As for the Federal government, it doesn't even hide its intention to censor the ongoing disaster, as it eliminates all funding to those environmental NGOs dedicated to keeping track of it.

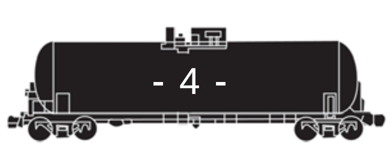
CATASTROPHE ON THE WAY

In the past few years the Canadian economy has engaged onto the path of total dependence to oil and gas, especially to Alberta's tar sands.

Last years have shown Canada's economy taking the path of total dependence to hydrocarbons, especially to Alberta's tar sands. Both the dirtiest and the most costly of all oils, tar sands produce only four barrels of oil with the energy of one, instead of the sixteen to a hundred barrels produced with ordinary petroleum. This means four times the mess: for each m^3 of tar produced in Alberta, between 3 and 5 m^3 of water are spoiled, not to speak of the violation and destruction of the landscape. NASA's chief climatologist, James Hansen, has shown that the tar sands contain twice the amount of CO^2 consumed in the history of the United States. They are already considered to represent the fifth most polluting project on the planet. What has been opened is a real Pandora's box: if we don't react immediately, the consequences will be huge.

> « the struggle against extractivist projects is an occasion to share sensibilities, to reveal complicities and create bounds that could reveal crucial. »

Oil companies and governments have no intention to stop. As tar sands extraction promises to increase drastically over the next few years, the pressure to export this toxic mud out of the continent is getting heavier. Hence the vertiginous increase (28 000% between 2008 and 2013) in the number of freight trains, often over a hundred wagons long, transporting this lethal substance through the country, crossing many residential or protected zones, as well as the precious rivers that provide people with drinkable water. The Lac Mégantic catastrophe, despite its unprecedented violence and 47 killed, wasn't enough to slow down these death trains. Authorities merely patched up the old DOT-111 wagons, designed for corn syrup transportation, to bring them up to CPC-1232 standards (shield, valve protections…) and make them more resistant—until they exploded in turn, in Gogoma, northern Ontario, in February and March 2015. All in all, nine trains have derailed in Canada since Lac Mégantic, leaking dangerous substances, five of them catching fire and exploding. It seems that no corrective measure can prevent the "collateral damage" caused by fanatic extractivism, except to stop it at once.



Lac Mégantic families had barely had time to mourn their dead when oil companies started using the tragic event to justify the construction of a pipeline across Quebec, to reach the ocean. They forgot to mention that such a hazardous project won't diminish the amount of oil transported on rail in any way, if shale fracking continues and tar sands follow their projected 40% increase. Yet there is much at stake: in Quebec only, the Energy East pipeline would cross more than 600 waterways, including a 700 km stretch alongside the St-Laurence river. In the case of a two main companies announcing massive oil extraction projects in the east are Junex and Petrolia. Junex possesses the equivalent of a quarter of Gaspésie territory in permits and has already drilled six wells, including Galt no.4, their most significant extraction site in 2015. Galt 4 is situated 20km west of Gaspé. Junex is planning around thirty additional drilling sites in the same sector. They will start drilling at Galt no. 5 in the beginning of summer 2015.

Petrolia, currently the most prolific extraction company in Quebec, has completed a horizontal well at Haldimand 4, in Gaspé, a few hundred meters from a residential sector. They are preparing to fully exploit this well. In 2010, Petrolia talked about hydraulic fracking; in 2014, the president of the company announced that they would not have recourse to fracking if it was not necessary to the profitability of a project. As fracking increases the flow and hence the production of a well, it is hard to believe that Petrolia will not make use of it. Finally, their Bourque project situated close to Murdochville will extract gas in order to liquefy and transport it via pipeline and boat to the north shore, supplying companies involved in the northern plan (Plan Nord).

On the island of Anticosti, Anticosti Hydrocarbons L.P. has drilled only 5 of the 18 wells planned for 2015. In 2016 this company plans fracking at three sites.

Moreover, there is still no moratorium on shale gas, despite popular opposition and the recognition of the dubious nature of this kind of extraction by the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE). Michael Binnion, president of the Quebec Oil and Gas Association, believes that "each enterprise with a project could want to try a pilot project", and so it will be difficult for the time being to determine where these projects could be launched. The president of the fossil fuels lobby has nonetheless mentioned the regions of Bécancour and Lotbinière as candidates. He also affirms that a pilot project would be helpful for developing a regulatory environment.

TRANSPORT OF HYRDROCARBONS

The exploitation of tar sands in Athabaska, of the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota, and more marginally, in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan have returned Canada and the United States to the ranks of major oil producers on the global scale. These products require means of transportation whose implementation is worrying. We are told that we will obtain a better price on foreign markets for "our" oil, leading to the following absurdity: we export oil when Canada and the USA are still net importers. Dedicated opposition in the west and to the south have led players in the industry to turn east to ship out their surplus production, leading to an explosion of construction projects and reversed pipelines as well as the excessive growth of train transport in Quebec.

The reversal of Enbridge's line 9B was the first project aimed at exporting the surplus production of the tar sands. Initially, Enbridge wanted to build a pumping station at Dunham, south of Montreal, to reverse the flow of oil through an obsolete pipeline. Photos show sections of the pipeline underwater with rusted and collapsing supports. An employee working on the maintenance of the existing pipeline confided to us that all the security valves leak, at least drops and sometimes a thin stream. These valves are situated at every three kilometers. What's more, the reversal of the pipeline would increase internal pressure on the pipe and, consequently, increase the likelihood of ruptures and spills. In New England, communities are already mobilizing against this reversal, before any further public announcements by the company. This spring,



Ongoing oil and gas projects and resistance

The provincial and federal governments have made massive commitments to oil and gas corporations, both to extraction and transportation. Several communities are being dispossessed of their lifestyles and living conditions. Of course, this pillage is being implemented without any consultation of the concerned communities. Here is an account of the various ongoing oil and gas projects.

OIL AND GAS EXTRACTION: OVERVIEW OF DISPOSSESSION

Exploration and exploitation permits are attributed under the rules set out by mining law. A law specific to oil and gas is currently being developed at the provincial level, meanwhile projects proposed on these territories are "supervised" by the regulation respecting water withdrawals and water protection (RPEP).

This regulation is more responsive to the needs of oil firms than to the populations affected. For instance, let's recall that extraction via fracturation (fracking) requires the injection of chemicals into the ground. RPEP abolishes only one product, alkylphenol, ignoring the many other highly toxic substances used in fracking. As the list of products remains a trade secret throughout the period of exploitation, according to this same regulation, we cannot prove the link between fracking and the contamination of groundwater. This is a "good deal" for oil companies.

Another aberration of the RPEP: in the United States, horizontal drilling must be situated at least one mile (1600 meters) away from any aquifer, whether it be the water table or surface water. In Québec, RPEP sets this limit to 400 meters. Since fractures during horizontal drilling frequently climb 500 to 600 meters above the well, we can safely conclude that aquifer contamination is guaranteed.

If RPEP had not been adopted in 2014, no exploratory drilling would have been possible on Anticosti: the Macasty shale that contains all the potential oil reserves on the island is situated just 400 meters under the water table. Marc Durand, a geologist, affirms that the RPEP was tailored to the needs of the oil companies.

> « *Extraction or transport, there is no lack of fronts on which to struggle because they come together in a fight against an entire system* »

In fact, only the Gastem project in south-east Ristigouche could have been stopped by this regulation, due to its proximity to the municipal water source. Ironically, the municipality is still the subject of a 1.5 million dollar lawsuit for having passed a regulation preventing the pursuit of the project.

In Gaspésie as a whole, exploration permits cover 80% of the peninsula. The

Exploiting an oil or gas deposit requires drilling a vertical well. A horizontal extension is then deployed in the region of the ground most likely to contain hydrocarbons. We inject fluids at high pressures (3 to 4 hundred times regular atmospheric pressure) to fracture the sub soil and free hydrocarbons that are difficult to otherwise extract. A part of these fluids is then drained along with the hydrocarbons that rise to the surface. A portion of the hydrocarbons and the liquids utilized in fracturing can also rise up along natural fissures, irrevocably contaminating sources of drinking water.

spill—with three times more incidents in the past 10 years, we might not have to wait very long—, it's one quarter of the planet's drinkable water that could be definitely spoiled. Oil companies assure that their high tech tracking technologies could detect any leak superior to 1,5% of the flow. Which means that leaks inferior to 1,5% could be simply undetectable. Consequently, with its projected flow of 1,1 million barrels a day, 24 hours would be enough to vomit 2,6 million liters of unrefined oil into nearby aquifers.

We should keep in mind that oil companies haven't shown much vigilance in the past: in 2010, after a citizen noticed a leak in a Kalamazoo (Michigan) pipeline, it took Enbridge 18 hours to cut the flow. In the end, in spite of massive investments (more than one billion USD—ten times more than for liquid petrol), the cleaning crew only managed to recover 5% of the spilled content. Because of their muddy texture, tar sands must be diluted with highly volatile and carcinogen solutions, like Benzene, complicating the clean-up procedures. Instead of floating like regular oil, the bitumen enclosed in the heavy sands sinks to the bottom of the water, far from cleaning teams' reach, only to be stirred up in the sewers each spring. Without mentioning the risks of winter spills—leaks on ice are barely even planned in any protocol, despite their very real possibility in these times of great freezes.

What political elites and unaccountable companies are trying to impose is not only the destruction of ecosystems, the extinction of whole species and the murder of populations through the poisoning of their drinkable water, but all of this at once: it is the end of the world.

Disaster movies have accustomed people to expecting such an end. But this shared and diffuse feeling of an ongoing and upcoming disaster had yet to be claimed in the broad daylight. For if capitalism has come to threaten the mere possibility of life on earth in order to generate profits, it must have entered a final phase. And it is up to us to try to keep it from dragging the whole world into its suicide. Against world's end, we must give agonizing capital a final blow.





ORGANIZING RESISTANCE

The goals are clear and we cannot afford defeat. If we are to stop the dangerous train transportation of oil and the construction of deadly pipelines, we must directly fight their extraction. Fossil fuels—tar sands, Bakken, shale gas, etc.—must be kept below ground, where they have been sleeping ever since Jurassic times.

Though we may encounter people—some of them from “the left,” even, for whom there is “no way to stop progress”—we will also most certainly meet many allies. Throughout the world, oil infrastructures are faced with fierce resistance. We must remember that it is under popular pressure, notably from the Prairies Lakotas, that Obama was forced to oppose his veto to the Keystone XL pipeline project. Indigenous peoples have shown tremendous courage defending their lands, which they often have never ceded, against infrastructures that threaten their ancestral ways of living. In so-called western Canada, for instance, the Unist’ot’en are using much ingenuity in order to stop the progress of the pipelines, building houses on their way. Land occupation is also being used in the Zone à Défendre (ZAD) that is currently blocking the construction of an airport in Notre-Dame-des-Landes (France). This strategy has the advantage of constituting a base from where the enemy can be expected, standing firm, while at the same time complicating the construction process.

In Quebec, popular resistance is well underway, thanks to the coordination of many local and regional committees. Important mobilizations have managed to hamper shale gas projects and, more recently, to stop the Cacouna harbor project. Resistance is alive in Sorel, while petrol extraction projects in Gaspé and Anticosti island are far from gathering unanimous support. At any rate, resistance is taking roots everywhere on the continent, not to mention the world. In this sense, our main challenge consists in articulating and harmonizing these struggles on common grounds, by fostering circulation and coordination between the centers of resistance, so that the movement emerging from their junction may gather strength.

Most of all, the struggle against extractive projects appears as an occasion to share sensitivities, to reveal affinities and develop ties that could become crucial in the years to come. Resistance is urgent, but it will be long-winded. As we share the air we breathe, it is by conspiring together that we will block the catastrophe!

EXTRACTING OURSELVES FROM COLONIALISM

In what the colonial empire has allowed itself to call “Canada” and “Quebec”, extractivism has dispossessed and is still dispossessing indigenous peoples who have never ceded the territories they inhabit. Ever since the arrival of Europeans, these peoples have faced despoilment, pillaging and extermination. This relationship between colonialists, indigenous peoples and settlers is being perpetuated to this day. Everywhere the tar sands are being exploited, communities are being expropriated. The colonialist mindset is deeply entrenched in us. Here and now, in this struggle, we must rid ourselves of what it represents, imposes and denies.

Indigenous people have offered strong resistance, in the West where the Unist’ot’en camp is actively contributing to blocking oil projects, and in the East where Elsipogtog, a Mi’kmaq community, has faced severe repression for their opposition to gas fracking, fighting back with dignity. Developing ties with these struggles and offering our active solidarity in support is crucial, if we want to build a resistance that frees us from the relationships we have constructed with nature and the peoples who inhabited it before we invaded it.

For more information:
Collectif Ni Québec Ni Canada

